



CITY OF TUCSON MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MODERN STREETCAR MILESTONE

CONSTRUCTION SET TO BEGIN AFTER FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION ISSUES FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The City of Tucson today received the green light to begin construction on the Modern Streetcar Project and begin spending the \$63 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant money. The announcement means the City of Tucson and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will be going to bid within the next several weeks on four separate contracts for the project, one of which is for the Cushing Street Bridge over the Santa Cruz River.

"This is another major milestone toward realizing completion of this important project, and I congratulate the City of Tucson on the tremendous job it's done moving the streetcar forward," said Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva. "The sooner Tucson enjoys twenty-first century public transportation, the sooner we'll see boosts to our economy and quality of life. I have supported the streetcar from day one, and I'm proud to say today marks another in a long line of successes for our entire metro community."

Said Pia Carusone, chief of staff for Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords: "Operation of the modern streetcar will provide a tremendous benefit to the economy, the environment and the quality of life in the Tucson area. With today's announcement, that time now is much closer to becoming a reality."

The City of Tucson qualified for the TIGER funding, which was established to create jobs as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, in February 2010. Pre-construction utility work on the Modern Streetcar route has started. Tucson Electric Power (TEP) crews recently completed work along the Santa Cruz River, west of I-10. Water line system improvement work underneath the Cushing Street Overpass and the westbound frontage road is slated to begin after the 57th Annual Tucson Gem, Fossil and Mineral Show. Local contractor K E & G Construction Co. is under contract with the City of Tucson for this work.

"Today we have achieved a big victory for both the region's multi-modal transportation system and our region's economy," said Mayor Bob Walkup. "The Modern Streetcar will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of transportation in Tucson, while adding new strength to our ability to recruit and expand businesses in Southern Arizona."

More than 125,000 people live, work and reside along the Modern Streetcar route. The Tucson Modern Streetcar will be a 3.9-mile fixed rail transit system that will connect the Arizona Health Sciences Center, University of Arizona, University Main Gate Square, 4th Avenue Shopping District, Downtown Tucson and the Mercado District development area.

"This announcement is monumental and a game changer for the University of Arizona, the City of Tucson and the entire community," said UA President Robert Shelton. "This next level of approval is phenomenal because of the magnitude of this project. The University of Arizona continues to provide unqualified support for the Modern Streetcar in Tucson. We look forward to our faculty, staff and students riding our American-made streetcars."

In the announcement today, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the Tucson Urban Corridor Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), concluding that the construction and operation of the modern streetcar project would cause no significant environmental effects.

"The modern streetcar project has the potential to transform our community as it has in other regions of the country. Now that construction will be able to move forward, we anticipate many good things to follow including new developments, reduced congestion in downtown Tucson, and easier connections among the activity centers and users along the streetcar route," said RTA Executive Director Gary Hayes. "We are in a milestone stage for this project and we have gotten this far due to the strong partnership we have built between the Regional Transportation Authority and the City of Tucson. We will continue to work together as we prepare to build this transcendental community project and deliver it to our citizens."

An April 2009 Value Engineering (VE) study recommended adding the Cushing Street Bridge and several track realignments, among other changes, triggering this recent supplemental environmental assessment. The Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment document was available for public review and comment online and as a hard copy until December 2, 2010, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) outreach guidelines.

The project is co-managed by the City of Tucson and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The modern streetcar project is part of the RTA's multi-modal plan approved by Pima County voters in 2006. For more information on the modern streetcar project, please visit www.tucsonstreetcar.com or call (520) 624-5656.

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